

SPIRIT OF THE PRESS.

EDITORIAL OPINIONS OF THE LEADING JOURNALS UPON CURRENT TOPICS—COMPILED EVERY DAY FOR THE EVENING TELEGRAPH.

RUFFIANISM ON RAILS.

From the N. Y. Tribune. It is getting to be a serious question whether the cars of our city passenger lines are not, at certain hours of the night, the most dangerous places to which a respectable citizen can resort. The murderous attack upon Mr. Putnam, last Wednesday evening, occurred in a respectable part of the city, and at a time when the streets ought to be comparatively safe. Yet it was a long while before any assistance was rendered to the dying man, and we may almost say it was by mere accident that the murderer was arrested. Foster, at any rate, went home without molestation, and, if he had not been recognized by one who knew him, he would probably have escaped scot free. The common complaint that the police are never at hand when they are wanted is unfair. The beats are long, and though the men be never so watchful and zealous, murder may easily be committed without their knowledge. The alarming fact suggested by the Putnam homicide is that street-cars afford such a safe and convenient field of operations for the robber, the bruiser, and the tipsy rous, unless drivers and conductors can be made to take some other view of their duties than now, seems to be accepted.

It is hard to read the newspaper accounts of this tragedy without indignation at the brutal indifference of the conductor who could hurry away and leave a dying man senseless in the road, and a much stronger feeling toward the driver, who is now in jail on suspicion of complicity in the outrage. We shall not prejudice these two men. There may be extenuation of the conduct of the one, and the circumstances which throw suspicion upon the other may be inaccurately reported. But the case has called out a great number of communications from passengers who have experienced the dangers of the city cars, and there is no doubt that several of the roads robbers and assaults, winked at by the drivers and conductors, are comparatively common. There are certain lines which the pot-house politicians and strikers are understood to use for the benefit of their friends, and on which a ruffian who has rendered good service to the party at primary meetings and on days of election is always sure of a situation. And men who know something of the dark side of city life have often noticed that pimps and pickpockets on these roads are generally on terms of confidential intimacy with the company's employes. The writer of these lines saw a gang of thieves make an attempt upon a gentleman's pocket on a certain platform, but, being foiled, they jumped off and escaped. The conductor then came forward and laughingly remarked to the driver that "they didn't do it as well as usual to-night." In reply to a question, he admitted that the same gang "stole his car" every night. "Do you mean to say that you let them do it?" "Well, it's none of my business. I'd only get myself into trouble if I said anything,"—a sentiment in which the driver heartily concurred. On the same line we saw a tipsy brute fall headlong three times into a lady's lap, and the conductor, when asked to pick him up, plumply refused. We suppose that was "none of his business" either. We are at least one line on which men in the most offensive stage of drunkenness have full license to annoy other passengers and terrify women; on which respectable ladies are hardly safe from insult at any time, and if insulted will get no protection from the conductor. We do not mean the line on which Mr. Putnam was killed; but it seems, from the reports of the Wednesday evening, that the regulations of that road also give drunken men the right to do pretty much as they please in the cars, provided they have paid five cents and are acquainted with the driver.

It has been proposed to remedy these disorders by giving the road hands the power to make arrests, holding the companies responsible for whatever abuse they may make of their authority. That plan would probably aggravate the evil in a city like New York. Conductors have already the right to expel from their cars anybody who is dangerous to the other passengers, or who offends against decency by intoxication, profanity, and so on. What we want is an order from the companies that this right shall be rigidly exercised. Conductors must understand that their duties are not confined to making time, packing passengers, and collecting fares. They are bound to protect their passengers in person and property. They are not to laugh while pockets are picked, nor to look on while women are abused by drunkards, nor to let the friends of the driver chase young ladies from one corner of the car to another, and then dash out the brains of any gentleman who interferes to protect them. Here is a lesson from the mournful tragedy of last week which surely can be learned without much trouble. While the horror of that assassination is still fresh, we wish a few of the directors of city car companies would spend a day and night in travelling over their lines and seeing for themselves the rampant ruffianism for which they are responsible.

CAN THE GERMANS UNITE WITH AMERICAN REPUBLICANS?

From the N. Y. Times. In the comments made by some of our contemporaries on our recent articles urging the necessity of incorporating more of the German-American population in the Republican ranks, there have been assumptions made which we desire, once and for all, to correct.

We have not been urging a "boundless wave of lager," as a means of winning over these voters, as the Tribune's writers in stating, nor, as assumed by the Brooklyn Union, have we recommended giving up "American habits" for German. What we urge is simply this:—The Republican party was not formed to support reforms in drinking habits any more than to advance reforms in religion. It has its definite municipal and national objects in the field of politics, objects which are sufficiently remote and sufficiently difficult of attainment to satisfy the most energetic and ardent reformer. They are primarily to preserve the fruits of the war at the South, to conduct the National Government economically and with careful regard to the resources of the nation, and to promote municipal purity and honesty.

The latter object in New York city just now looms up over all others, and affects the daily comfort and prosperity of every inhabitant. To attain this, to purify the city from official corruption and dishonesty, to restore its good name and make its citizenship an honor rather than a disgrace, we need the votes of a large body of respectable and orderly citizens, who are now mainly against us—we mean the Ger-

man-Americans of New York State. These, though substantially in sympathy with the Republicans and bitterly opposed to the Catholic Irish, are driven from our ranks by the attempt of many of our friends to urge extreme abstinence legislation on the party. We need not say to the readers of the Times that we have the highest respect for the motives and objects of the "Temperance" party. We should regret seeing in any way to obstruct their legitimate and moral work. They are struggling with the most gigantic evil of modern civilization, and they do it consistently by themselves abstaining entirely from even innocent indulgence. Still, their field is the moral one, not the political. Extreme legislation will only produce reaction. The Republican party is, moreover, not the organization for their efforts. They should form a "total abstinence" party, apart from all political organizations. Neither can we forget, when these reformers urge extreme legislation for the laboring classes, that the great majority of the American middle classes do new in their own homes indulge in moderate and innocent drinking, which such laws would not check.

It is also a great mistake, which those who have argued against us in this matter have made, that the Germans demand nothing but unbounded license. The Germans, it is true, have had for generations a very different social habit from ours. They are mainly natives of wine countries, and, as is the custom of such people the world over, are in the habit of drinking, in family and socially, somewhat freely of light beers and wines, which are much less alcoholic than our wines. As a general thing, they are less given to intoxication than our own people or the Irish. In arriving here, under a different climate, with stronger liquors in use and dearer wines, and among a people of different social customs, the more sensible part of them see the propriety and necessity of somewhat changing their habits. They behold every day, in the Irish quarters of the city, and in the American bar-rooms, the frightful effects of unstrained whisky and rum drinking. They see the long roll of crimes against persons and property every Monday morning, committed on the Sunday in our corner groceries and rum shops. Now, we should be doing violence to all that we know of the good sense of the German-Americans, if we did not suppose that they were open to any reasonable compromise on the subject of public drinking. There is one, for instance, very simple and practical, which has not at all been sufficiently considered, but which would make a vast practical difference in public temperance; that is, a law forbidding the sale of any liquor in places where provisions were sold, thus taking away the innocent temptations from laborers and women who are running up accounts or making purchases in groceries. Then, again, the distinction which could be easily made between selling alcoholic liquors and beers. Or still further, the permitting the opening of beer gardens on Sunday afternoon. Any, or all of these compromises would, we believe, be acceptable to the great majority of the German-Americans, simply on the grounds of public policy and general welfare; the community having the right to preserve a part of one day for its own repose or order, and to forbid dangerous stimulants to the working and other classes when they were most likely to be tempted to criminal actions.

Our own reformers, however, would unhesitatingly reject any such compromises, on the ground of conscience. But the sensible and wise citizen, seeing that in a great cosmopolitan city like this he could not make all the people what he would have them, either in religion or morals, would be glad of the second best thing—to preserve some order and temperance, and check extreme indulgence and crime. United, the German and American Republicans could accomplish this; separated, we have what we see now—corruption in government and unlimited license in social habits.

DEMOCRATIC DISTRUST OF THE PEOPLE.

From Harper's Weekly (Edited by Geo. Wm. Curtis). One of the most suggestive facts in our political history is that the Democratic party has been for many years the organization of all the aristocratic and anti-American elements of our society. Twenty years ago the sole great policy of that party was the extension and confirmation of slavery. The slave-holding class was as hazy, although not as refined and educated, an aristocracy as any in the world. In circles where the "Southern" influence was supreme the political and social sentiment was purely medieval. Under the dominance of this sentiment in the Southern States all the guarantees of liberty were despised, and its express constitutional stipulations were disregarded. Yet this aristocratic class and this sentiment called themselves Democratic, and absolutely controlled the Democratic party. At the same time every young man becoming interested in politics observed that if any body had a cynical contempt for the people, or disdained their capacity to govern themselves wisely, and extolled a "strong" paternal government, like that of Austria, he was sure to be a Democrat. And at length, when the aristocratic interest, fearing to lose control of the Government, attempted its destruction in order to found a new system upon the worst form of human slavery, the conspiracy was perfected in a Democratic cabinet Congress, was maintained in the field by Democrats, and was morally sustained by the Democratic party.

The attempt to destroy a free popular government by those who called themselves Democrats having failed, the restoration of the Union followed. Against the protestations of the Democratic party emancipation had been effected, and the disturbed States were full of two classes—the freedmen and the late rebels. True to its aristocratic instinct, the Democratic party struggled to retain all that could be saved of slavery, and established black codes, introducing among freedmen a system of caste. The mischief was evident, and the scheme was defeated. Equal civil rights were secured by the equal ballot, and this also against the most strenuous hostility of the party called Democratic. Throughout the epoch of reconstruction the policy of equal rights among American citizens, which is the distinction of the American system, was dogmatically resisted by the anti-American and aristocratic spirit which inspired the Democrats; and the party which had attempted the overthrow of the Government because its lawful tendency seemed to be adverse to the extension of slavery, and which sullenly demanded that those whom it could not keep slaves should not be made equal citizens, denounced the party of liberty and union as despotic, because it would not immediately deliver the freedmen to the mercies of those whose hands were yet dripping with the blood of loyal citizens.

It is not less observable that the tone of the Democratic press, as it is called, is in harmony with this tendency to distrust the people. Through the war it alighted gladly to the British Tories who favored the rebel-

lion, and sneered at the English Liberals. When Goldwin Smith, one of our best friends, came to this country in 1864, this press steadily depreciated him and his work in influencing English opinion. Meanwhile, true to the same instinct, the most servile lackeys of the French Emperor were to be found in the American Democratic press. Abroad it toadied to Louis Napoleon and patronized John Bright, while at home it steadily ridiculed the unfortunate colored citizens, sneered at the Southern leaders who honorably accepted the results of the war, and heaped the most fulsome adulation upon those who did not. The first Democratic National Convention after the war was controlled by the same old spirit of hatred of equal popular rights. Even the earthquake had not shaken off the dominance of the slave-holding aristocracy. So abject had been the submission of the party to a spirit utterly antagonistic to American principles that it was helpless in the grasp of Wade Hampton and his Southern friends, and the Democratic party, therefore, went into the last Presidential election, as it had entered upon the elections of a generation, as the party of hostility to equal rights and aristocratic distrust of the people.

The latest illustrations of this spirit are not less significant. Among the most striking is the alliance of the Democratic party with the most despotic and reactionary school of the Roman Catholic Church. That Church has clearly defined political policy in this country, which is fatal to the success of a free popular system, and of that policy the Democratic party is the supple servant. So fearful is it of offending that Church that the Democratic press is either silent upon the political regeneration of Italy or sneers at it, while it is forced by the same fear to fawn upon the Church by depreciating the importance of Dr. Dollinger's excommunication. So also in the Democratic Congressional caucus to prepare an address to the people, Senator Salisbury, of Delaware, is reported to have said that the Democratic party of his State would not consent to acquiescence in the equal rights of citizens; and the representative man of the party from the West has taken the same ground, and is sustained by the most influential Southern Democratic presses and politicians.

But in the State of New York, where the party is thoroughly organized under the Tammany leadership, the contempt for the people is most manifest. Without permitting even the reading of their edicts in the Legislature, and, of course, without tolerating the usurpation of the Erie bill to municipal government. Officers whom the people had elected for a year or for two years are retained in office for two and three years more than their elected term. The cities have also elected their officers in the city, of whom only were elected by the people, and one of whom has had his term extended after election for two years more, shall levy and disburse all the city taxes!

The details of this imperial system we have heretofore exposed. It is so ingeniously constructed that while, as in Louis Napoleon's France, there is the form of a popular election, the authority and terms of subsequent appointment are such that the whole power resides in officers who are not elected by the people, and whose terms are more than double that of the appointing officer, who, by the exercise of the concentration of patronage in their hands, is necessarily their puppet and tool. Executive responsibility is thus annihilated, and such is the total disregard of the ordinary safeguards of a free popular system in a party which has for more than a generation despised equal rights, and defended slavery as the foundation of free institutions, that if the Democratic leaders had decided that the terms of the appointed—which are the real—offices in the system should be twenty years instead of five, the decision would have been ratified with the same utter disregard of the ordinary forms of legislation.

In presence of such facts party heat is impertinent. The question is of the practicability and permanence of American institutions. Here is a party which has always opposed equal liberty, which instinctively affiliates abroad with the most absolute and reactionary policy, which at home is the ally of the Roman Church in its assault upon the public school system, which includes the Ku-klux and every enemy of the Union, and which now, in the State of New York, strikes with the Erie bill at the right of property-holders to elect their agents, and by its amended charter abolishes popular government in the city. This party is strong, rich, organized, unscrupulous, it is the servant of the combined capital of enormous corporations, and its corrupt methods are so notorious that of themselves they justly excite anxiety for the future of the country. It is supported by ignorance, by class jealousy, by hatred of race, by disaffection to the Government. Is this a party which can safely obtain control of the national administration?

It is a patriotic, not a party question. It appeals to every intelligent Democrat, and it appeals especially to those Republicans who, in presence of such a peril, ardently engage in the quarrel of their party in New York. It appeals no less to the Republicans of Ohio and Missouri who seek to raise the party standard above an error which we cordially sympathize—that they do it in a manner which will strengthen our own party and not the enemy. It appeals to the American faith in the people and in free popular institutions, that it shall defeat those who distrust and despise both, and who are leagued fast with the foes of intelligence and liberty. Indeed, the only doubt of the issue in 1872 springs from indifference or blindness to the fact that the paramount question is whether—whatever the faults of Republican measures and men—the party that we have described, whatever its professions may be, can safely be entrusted with the Government.

THE GERMANS IN POLITICS AND PENNSYLVANIA.

From the N. Y. World. One of the worst features of the war carried on by the railroad corporations against the coal miners and their association is the attempt to create national antagonisms between the working men of different races employed in the mines, as well as among the inhabitants generally throughout the coal regions. A month ago the agents of the companies thought they had succeeded in breaking up the union by means of jealousies stirred up among the Germans, Irish, Scotch, and Welsh against the two chief officers of the association, who are English by birth. But the men were wise enough to see through the scheme, and by their own voluntary action restored the most perfect harmony. This time the companies have been shrewder. It appears that the men whom they engaged in Castle Garden and sent up on a special train so as to arrive at Scranton in the middle of the night were Germans; and when some of the men of the union were suspected of an intention to interfere with them the whole German population of the neighborhood was appealed to by the agents of the railroad to protect their countrymen against the "villainous Irish," who

were said to be at the bottom of it. But the Germans, however much they may determine to protect their countrymen from injustice, are not likely to permit themselves to be used "un anderer Leute die Kastanien aus dem Feuer zu holen." They of all people in the world understand how that game has been played on them for a century past, and how the persistent playing off of one nationality against the other—Prussian against Badenese, Austrian against Saxon—cheated them of their liberties. They can see the role which the radical party has sketched out for them in politics admirably represented in a recent number of Harper's Weekly, where a German and an Irishman are playing see-saw upon a barrel, while a radical bank, railroad, and tariff monopolist stands in the background, and his jug at the spigot. This is the role which the Germans are expected to play in national politics as well as in the coal-miners' strike. So, at least, would the radical monopolists have it.

JOHN-JACK.

From the Golden Age (Edited by Theodore Tilton). John-Jack, in the story, was an eccentric individual, who fancied he was two persons in one—John the good, and Jack the bad. These two in one often argued violently with each other—John reasoning against Jack's evil courses, and Jack vindicating himself on the ground of his innate depravity. Sometimes John would get a strong grip on Jack, and more often Jack reigned dominant over John. However, whenever he was in the ascendancy, there was a civil (or rather an uncivil) war—an unending feud which agitated the one general and tempest-tossed breast of double and divided John-Jack. In like manner, for a few months past, the two wings of the Democratic party—the better and the worse, the humane and the cruel, the law-abiding and the Ku-klux—have been wrestling with each other in a John-Jack strife. The World, and some of its followers at the North, have uttered the reasonable voice of John, saying, "Bygones must be bygones; the amendments must be sustained; and the negro shall be unmoored." But on the other hand a dozen or more of the old-fashioned fire-eating presses throughout the South, with some at the North to borrow and propagate their flames, have replied in the temper of Jack, saying, "We mean to repudiate the amendments; we shall show no quarter to the negro; and we are reaching out our bloody hand into the past to bring back our old régime." And so a John-Jack controversy rages within the Democratic party; a debate between its inner voices, but heard outside; a colloquy between its nobler and its baser self; a struggle which may end in the victory of reason on the one hand, or of madness on the other.

Just at this point, the Democratic members of Congress issued an address to the people of the United States—a sort of Partisan arrow which, in their retreat from Washington, they have let fly at the Federal Administration. Their attitude towards the Republican party does not interest us; this attitude is, of course, a partisan hostility—expressed in criticisms more or less just; but the policy which they propose for the Democratic party—their own future career—excites our profound attention. Having spoken, what have they said? Is it the language of John or Jack? It is a mid-way, non-committal, half-measure, in which we hear neither John's declaration of good intent, nor Jack's counter-statement of purposed mischief. There is the best of reasons for this diplomatic vagueness. The Democrats in Congress, who are the authors of this address, consisting, as they do, both of bad and good men, or, in other words, both of Johns and Jacks, wanted their document to utter, not a discordant, but a harmonious voice; and as the whole body of signers could not speak collectively either as John or as Jack, the pronouncement was made to exclude everything Johnsonian on the one hand, and everything Jacksonian on the other. No party prospectus was ever more meaningless on this point, concerning which the people to whom it is addressed want to know its meaning; and that is, the future policy of the Democratic party in reference to the fourteenth and fifteenth amendments. On this momentous subject, this address is what Rufus Choate would have styled "a glittering generality." The Democratic party itself does not know what policy this manifesto manifests—whether John is determined that Jack shall not interfere with the amendments, or whether Jack is to put a gag in John's mouth, and then "cry havoc and let slip the dogs of war." John takes up the document and reads what he says of "the rights which every man cherishes," and "the guarantees of law and order," and of throwing round "the humblest citizen, wherever he may be, the protectingegis of those safeguards of personal liberty which the fundamental laws of the land assure"—all this John reads with delight, and then says to Jack, "This means that the fourteenth and fifteenth amendments are to be sustained, and the negro is to be protected under them;" but Jack replies in hot blood, "It means no such thing. On the contrary, just as for fifty years the Declaration of Independence did not, in the South, include the negro, so now these amendments shall be, to him, a similar mockery. And since there was always in the North, a constitutional guarantee of free speech, and yet there was never any free speech in one-half the Union, so now, in that same half, these constitutional amendments, guaranteeing the civil and political liberty of the negro, shall be treated as Republican promises made to the ear which a Democratic administration shall break to the hope." And so the Democratic members of Congress, in their address, have stimulated, rather than healed, the controversy between John and Jack. Notwithstanding the mock gravity, and the sad-sobbed solemnity, and the semi-patristic sweetness of this manifesto, it is nevertheless "a trumpet of one policy nor another." It forecasts neither one policy nor another. It gives no assurance whether the Democratic party mean to protect the negro against the Ku-klux, or to re-enforce the Ku-klux against the negro.

Sitting as independent critics of the political situation—looking dispassionately on a game which we have no hand in playing—we give it as our prophetic opinion (worthless as such horoscopes may be) that John can win, but Jack must lose, the next Presidential election for the Democratic party. Three years ago at Tammany Hall, if John had been allowed to nominate Chief Justice Chase, and Jack had been prevented from nominating Frank Blair, the Democratic party would in all probability have won the great battle which they then lost. Jack's disposition is to lose or ruin. Having ruled the party to its ruin, the question for that party now to settle is, whether or not John shall rise to the dignity of the succession, and by asserting that moral force which, in its majestic onset, sometimes stuns, stupefies, and conquers brutish violence, compel Jack to yield in 1872 to the wholesome counsels which he despised in 1868.

For our own part, if John shall become the

thorough master of Jack, we shall be willing to see him become the chosen master of us all. But at present the John-Jack struggle between the World and the party which it is attempting to inspire—a struggle in which the Congressional address-makers have studiously taken part—a struggle which consists of good advice in the North and of midnight assassinations in the South—this struggle between John and Jack is, in its present stage, like a controversy between Jacob's voice and Esau's hand. Who can trust a political party whose leader is John-Jack?

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